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CITY TRANSFER COMPANY

By Janice Roth & Ralph Lea



▲ *1915; The City Transfer Co., Frank Wauchope and Frank F. Irey. Shown on north side of Pine Street; Dempsey D. Smith Dry Goods Store on the left.*

Frank F. Irey was born March 29, 1877 on a farm in the state of Missouri. At the age of 21 he moved to New Mexico with the Santa Fe Railroad. Frank was a miner for two years before moving to Riverside in Southern California where he engaged in farming. Frank F. Irey married Mabel Thompson on October 22, 1902. They had three children, William Leslie, Leona May and Clayton Eslie.

In the summer of 1904 Frank relocated once more. With a team of four horses hitched to his wagon and about $500 in his pocket the Frank Irey family arrived in Lodi. This time Frank put his team of four horses to work by hauling grapes for the local farmers. Teaming kept Irey and his four horses busy throughout the harvest season. Frank set a record for those days by hauling a train carload of Tokay grapes from the Covell Vineyard to the packing house each day throughout the harvest season.

Mr. Irey built up a large transfer, express and contract hauling business. Later he excavated dirt for basements. Many of the large buildings erected in



▲ *Lodi Irey City Transfer Co. at Lockeford picnic.*

the Lodi area were excavated by Irey. House moving was another of his accomplishments, moving one house seven miles. Frank also built houses and an apartment building on Grand Avenue, now Central Avenue, in Lodi.

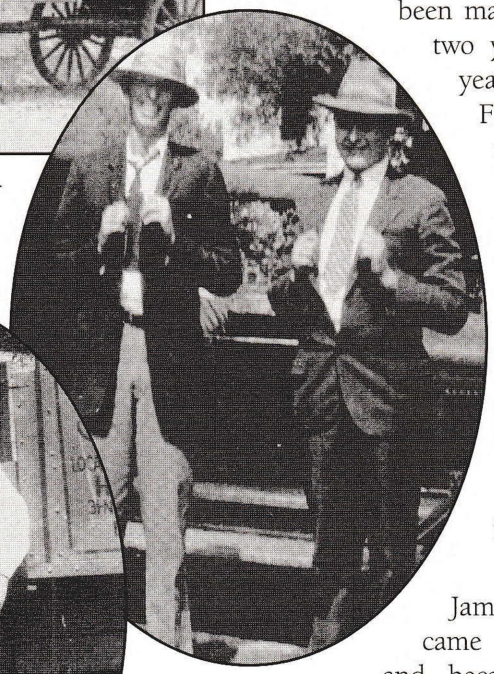
On the last day of 1904 a daughter, Leona May, was born to Frank and Mabel. Their inventory totaled $1,576 with only $70 in cash and included four horses, two wagons, three cows, one hog, ninety chickens (eggs sold for 35 cents a dozen), one butter churn, one bicycle, one sewing machine, one washing machine, an organ, thirty glasses of jelly, 119 quarts of canned fruit and a baby buggy.

By 1906 Frank had five horses, two wagons and three sets of harnesses. In 1907 he had established the City Transfer Company which did draying and hauling of all sorts of things. As Lodi started to grow on School Street, Frank moved the houses and then dug basements for the new business buildings.

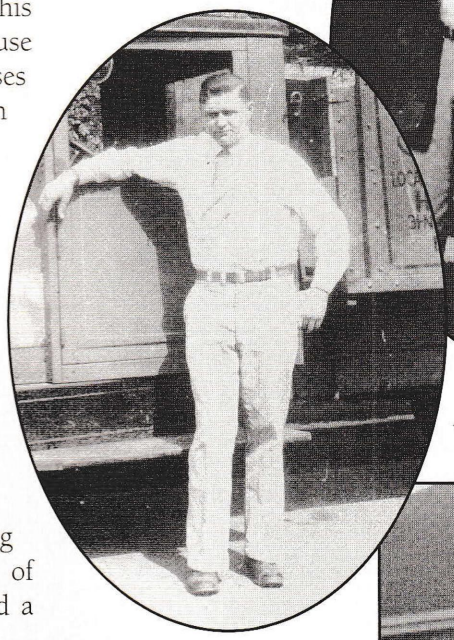
On April 27, 1907 the Irey's second son was born and named Clayton Eslie Irey, but later the name was changed to Cecil Raymond. Mabel Edna (Thompson), Frank's wife and mother of their three young children, died on November 5, 1907. It would be over two years before Frank would marry again. On February 20, 1910 Miss Mabel Wauchope and Frank Irey were wed. Mr. Irey built a single story house at 342 East Locust Street at a cost of $8,000 for his children and new new wife. He and his second wife had one daughter also named Mabel, Mabel Elmira.

The business grew. They now constructed bridges and did improvements on roads. Frank had enlarged his business to 14 horses and mules, two drays, two wagons and one express. On May 25, 1912, Mabel Wauchope Irey died having been married a little over two years. For over a year, 1914-1915, Frank Irey was forced to place his four young children in a Stockton home. It was not until after his marriage to Rebecca Berryman that the family was back together at their home in Lodi.

Frank's brother, James Washington, came to Lodi in 1914 and became one of the



Lee Maner and Les Irey, 1920's; 342 E. Locust Street. ▶



◀ *June, 1928: "Les" Irey, on corner of Locust and Central.*

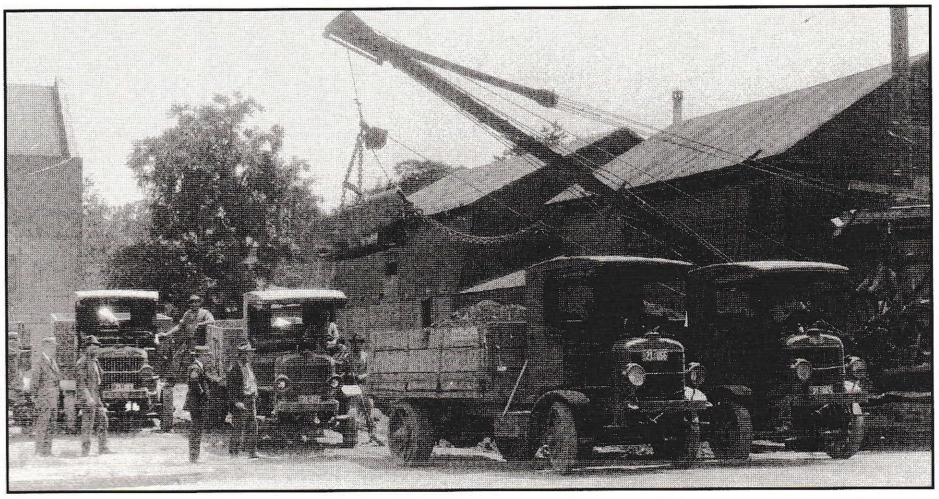


▲ *House built in 1908 by Frank F. Irey, on Locust Street.*

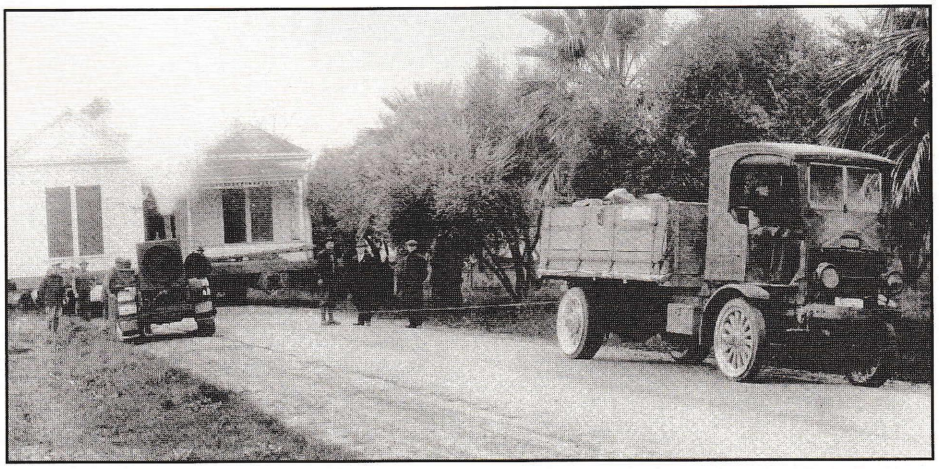
drivers for the City Transfer Company. "Wash," as he was called, would later move to Youngstown and become a constable.

Two more of Frank's brothers and a sister moved to Lodi. Grover Irey became a chauffeur for the City Transfer Company. Frank became a partner with S.W. McCleary in 1914. They did grading and macadam (a type of road paving) work for many country roads in the northern part of San Joaquin County. They also constructed bridges and did other road improvements. The company had expanded to 24 horses and mules, seven wagons and had purchased their first truck, believed to be a Reo, for $1,700 and an automobile for $800. Each following year the company purchased additional equipment and by 1919 their inventory included nine trucks, six wagons, while the horses and mules had been reduced to five.

The company had an office on North Sacramento Street. First at 105, then 19 and still later at 21 North Sacramento Street. The equipment was housed on East Locust Street near his house which now included a second floor.



Frank F. Irey's fleet of City Transfer Trucks. ▲



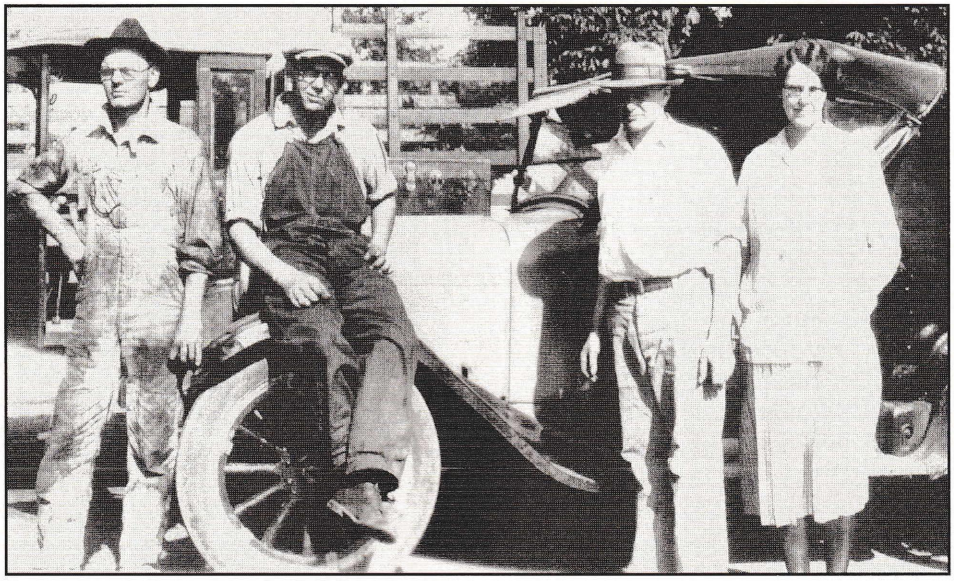
Frank F. Irey's City Transfer moving a house. ▲



▲ *The wedding, June 9, 1928. Mr. and Mrs. Fred Floyd, Grandpa and Grandma Floyd, Rebecca Irey, mother, Louise and Les.*

The following year Frank Irey changed partners. Charles O. Holden became his partner for the next seven years. They continued truck moving and hauling, but they also went into the road contractor business. Some of the local jobs consisted of work on Alpine, Thornton and Ray Roads and on Kettleman and Harney Lanes. Their work then moved up to the state level including work on Highway 40 between Truckee and the California Nevada State Line, Yosemite Valley and the rebuilding of Highway 50 east of Placerville. It was on this last job along the American River on November 29, 1927 that Frank Irey was killed when the caterpillar tractor plunged off the road.

After the accident Frank Irey's son, Cecil, completed the road con-



▲ *Irey Trucking, June, 1928. Mr. Davis, Cecil Irey, Les Irey, and mother Rebecca Irey.*

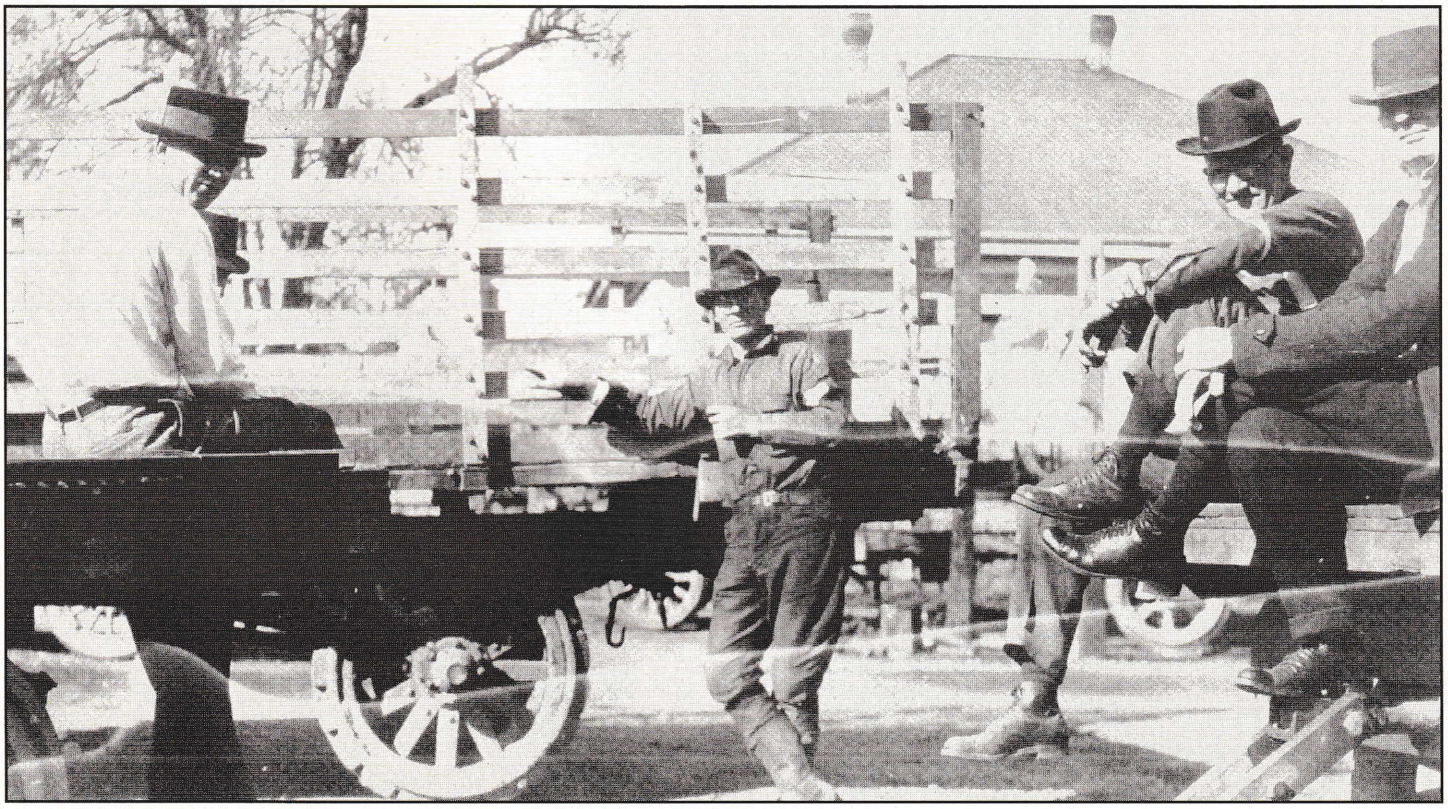
tract. Later the two brothers, Cecil and William Leslie Irey, purchased their father's business and the City Transfer Company and began operating a trucking service.

William K. "Les" Irey studied at Salem School and Lincoln School before starting Lodi High. He began working for this father at the City Transfer Company while he was still a young boy and a student at Lodi High School. By the age of 15 he was driving a truck for the company. Les studied engineering at the College of the Pacific in Stockton. After graduation he spent two years as an engineer before returning to Lodi and the City Transfer Company. He married Louise Floyd of Healdsburg, whom he had met at the College of the Pacific.

Les and Louise were both long and active members of the First Methodist Church of Lodi as well as the Lodi Masonic Groups. They were patron and matron of the Lodi O.E.S.

In 1944 Les bought out his brother's interest in the City Transfer Company and within two years reverted to the specialties of moving and storage of household goods. He sold the general hauling and long distance moving portion of the business to Art Altnow of the Lodi Truck Service. Les then purchased a Mayflower Moving Franchise. For eight years City Transfer Company was one of 500 independent agents of the Mayflower Moving Company, nationwide furniture movers. This brought the familiar green and yellow colors with the ship on the wave to Lodi and City Transfer.

On December 1, 1956, Les Irey changed the name of one of Lodi's oldest business firms from City Transfer Company to Irey Moving and



▲ *Irey Holden Construction Co. Andy Weisner, Mr. Davis, Frank F. Irey, and C.O. Holden.*

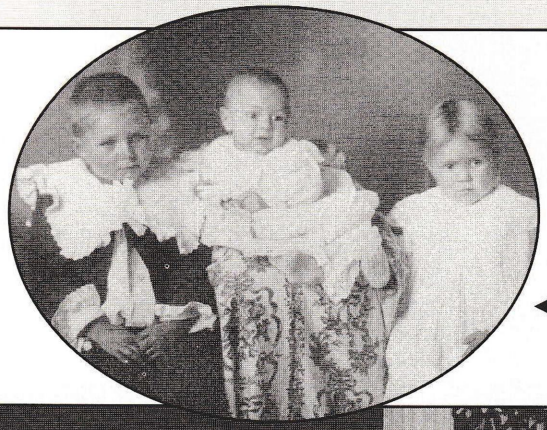
Storage Company. The firm maintained two warehouses for storage, one on East Locust Street and a larger building on Railroad Avenue, both in Lodi. Les was one of the first haulers to adopt a "pallet vault system" where all articles are completely enclosed in a box or "vault."

Les Irey was proud of his operation. His wife, Louise, was the company's sales representative and Mrs. Emilie Pirtle was the office manager. Ardon Irey, Les' younger brother, was a foreman and the three truck drivers were Bill Irey, Les' son, Frank Hoffman and Bill Cutts.

On July 1, 1965, after sixty-one years in the moving and storage business, William "Les" Irey retired.

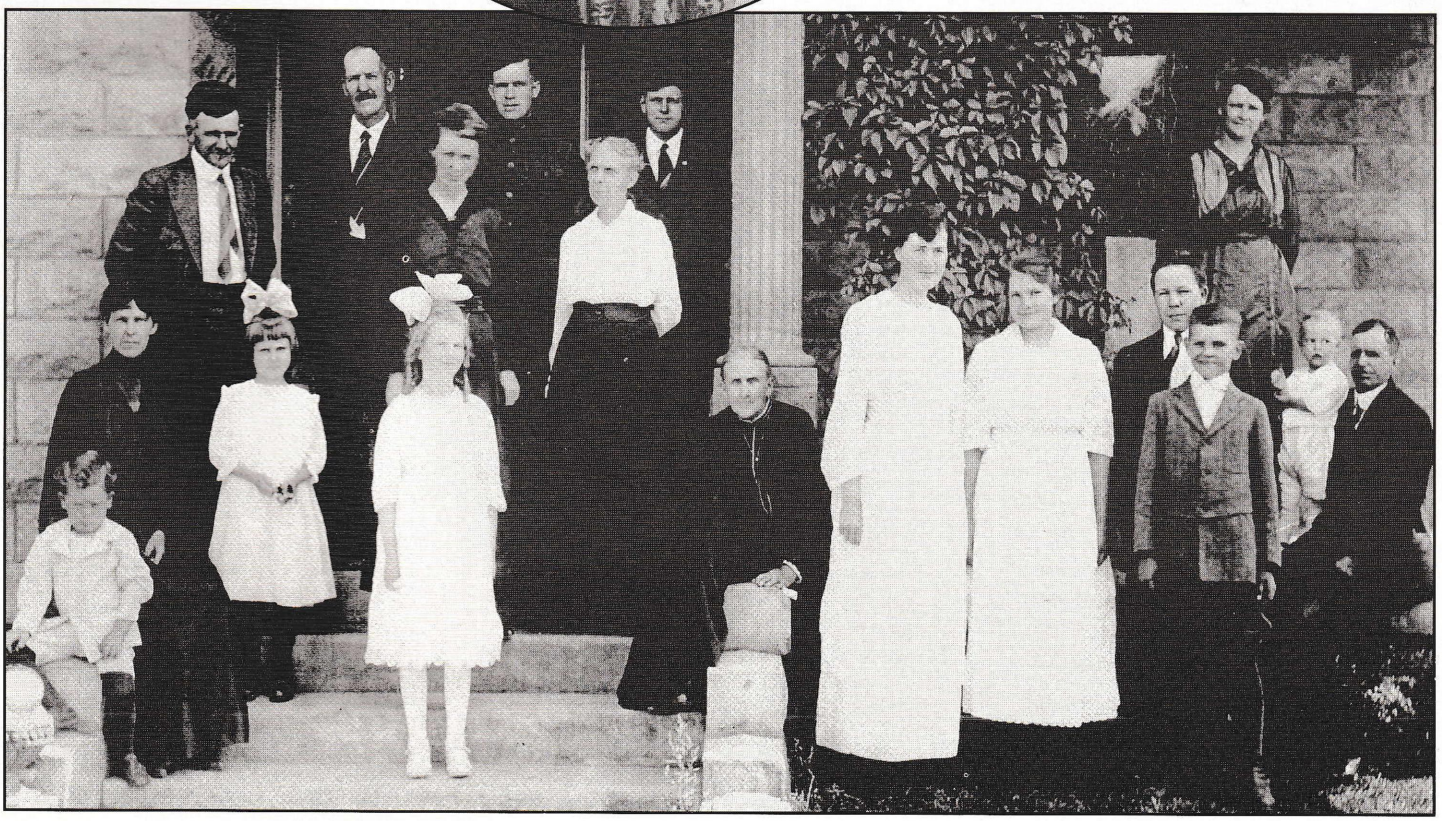


June, 1928. Cecil Irey, Mr. Davis, Clarence Berg and Leslie Irey on Locust Street, near Central. ▲



Most of the City Transfer pictures and some story content are courtesy of the Irey Family and the Lodi Public Library.

◀ *1908 or 1909; Lodi; Leslie, Cecil and Leona Irey.*



Irey house and family, circa 1910. ▲

EARLY ACAMPO

By Lucy Reller & Ralph Lea

The Central Pacific Railroad started service in 1869 between Stockton and Sacramento. It crossed a county road 2-1/2 miles north of Lodi. Farmers started loading railroad cars of grain at this spot. A large grain warehouse was built and in 1872 William Kirkland built a large general store and a Post Office was established on August 28, 1872, under the name of Acampo.

A large portion of the land that would become the town was part of John N. Woods' 320 acre ranch he acquired in 1858. John was a nephew of Jeremiah Woods, founder of Woodbridge, where J.N. Woods ran a store before moving to Stockton in 1877.

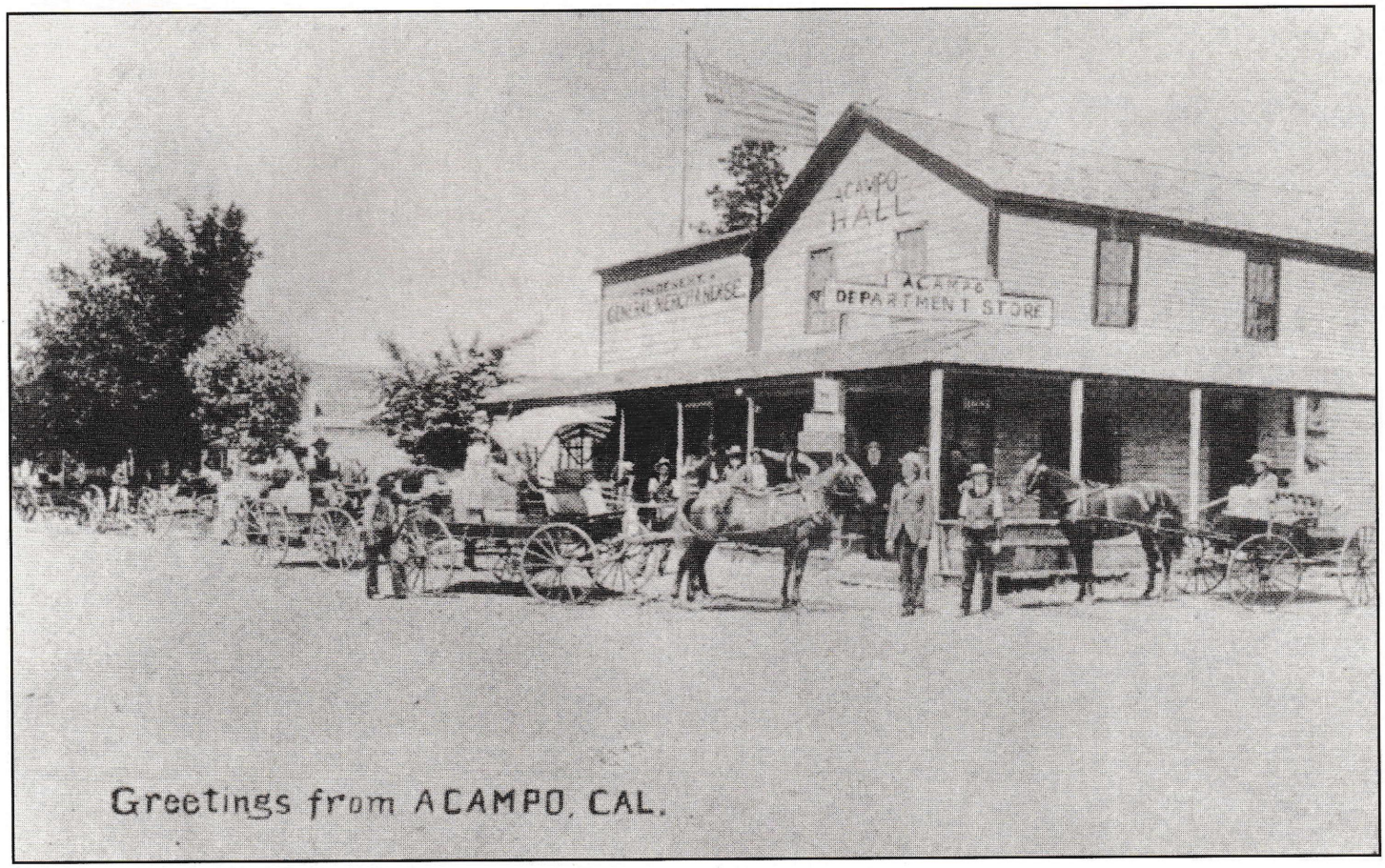
B.F. Langford, early pioneer located his large ranch some three miles east of the future town of Acampo in 1851. This four time State Senator was a leader in many ways in the Lodi area – farmer, banker and business owner.

In 1876 Langford and others persuaded the Central Pacific Railroad to build a new ticket and freight office in Acampo. It had become the largest shipper of freight between Stockton and Sacramento. In 1878 over 2,000 tons of grain was moved from the Acampo station. Store owner Kirkland sold large quantities of grain. That same year, 550 railroad cars of grain were shipped from Acampo. At this time the town, besides the Post Office and general store had blacksmith shops, a wagon shop, saloon and a small hotel. The largest building was the D. M. Denehy Granary Warehouse built ten years earlier. D. Welch ran the saloon, the Devoe brothers as well as S.F. Likens and Denehy had blacksmith shops. Likens and Denehy were also hardware dealers and wagon makers. Garvin Kirkland managed the General Merchandise Store for William Kirkland who was also the agent for the Central Pacific Railroad.

Miss Youngman lived in Acampo and taught school at nearby Houston District. Liberty Township which encased Acampo had W.R. Fugitt and G.W. Thomas as Constables. H.G. Emerson and D.J. Donely were Justices of the Peace.

It wasn't long before Acampo had a church and two harness makers.

The year was 1887 and Acampo had 100 residents in the town. This was also the year Morris Van Gelder, nurseryman, moved from Sacramento



▲ *1911; William Kirkland built this store in Acampo in 1872.*

to Cherokee Lane near Acampo Road. Van Gelder supplied thousands of fruit trees to Langford, Buck and John Cory who started orchards of peaches, plums and apricots in the Acampo area. Mr. Van Gelder had an eye for beauty and started planting fan palm trees on both sides of Acampo Road with olive trees in between the palms. This led to local residents calling Acampo Road – Palm-Olive Avenue.

In 1915 there was still a hotel in Acampo operated by Isaac Philippi's widow Matilda. Grape packing houses and loading sheds replaced the grain and watermelons. The Earl Fruit Company and the Pioneer Fruit Company packing sheds were south of Main Street and the American Fruit Growers plant was north of town and all were on the west side of the railroad tracks.

After prohibition in 1934 the Acampo Winery and Distillers was started in the old Denchy grain warehouse, last used by Smith and Wright. Officers of the winery were Frank L. Murphy, President, J.B. Gundert, who was vice president of the Farmers and Merchants Bank in Lodi, was vice president, and Archie Cellini was secretary, plant manager and wine maker.

The cooperage was over two million gallons when the Gibson Wine Company obtained the winery in 1943 and a year later sold it to Dino Barengo.

There is a mystery as to who named the town and why Acampo. Was the Spanish word used because the land was used for grazing or did early settlers who camped nearby associate the word "campo" with camp?

Although the town has not prospered, it certainly has survived.

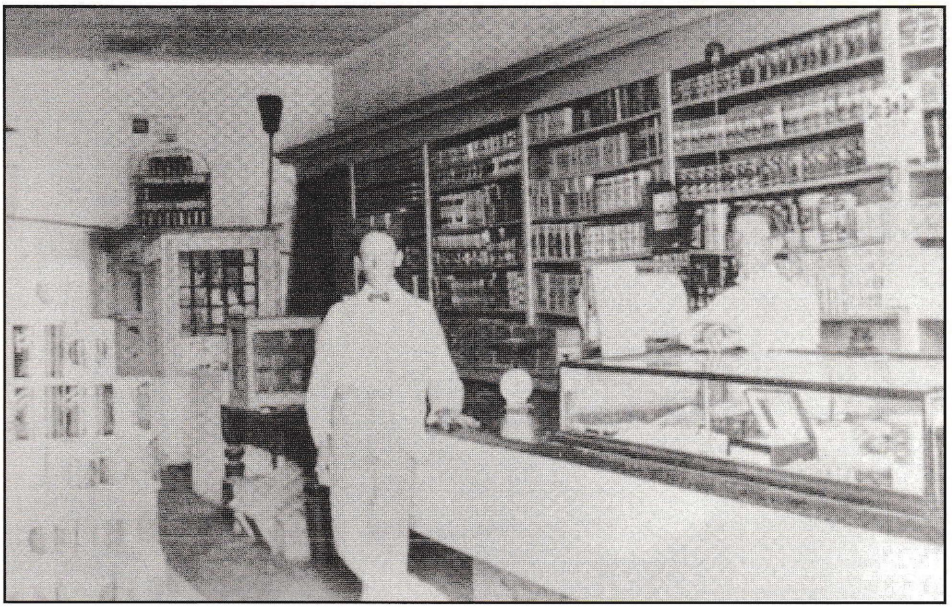


Photo courtesy of Carol Dean

Acampo store, Baucha and Blakesly, Blakesley on left. ▲



Acampo Hotel, early grain harvester in front. ▲
Photo courtesy of San Joaquin County Historical Museum

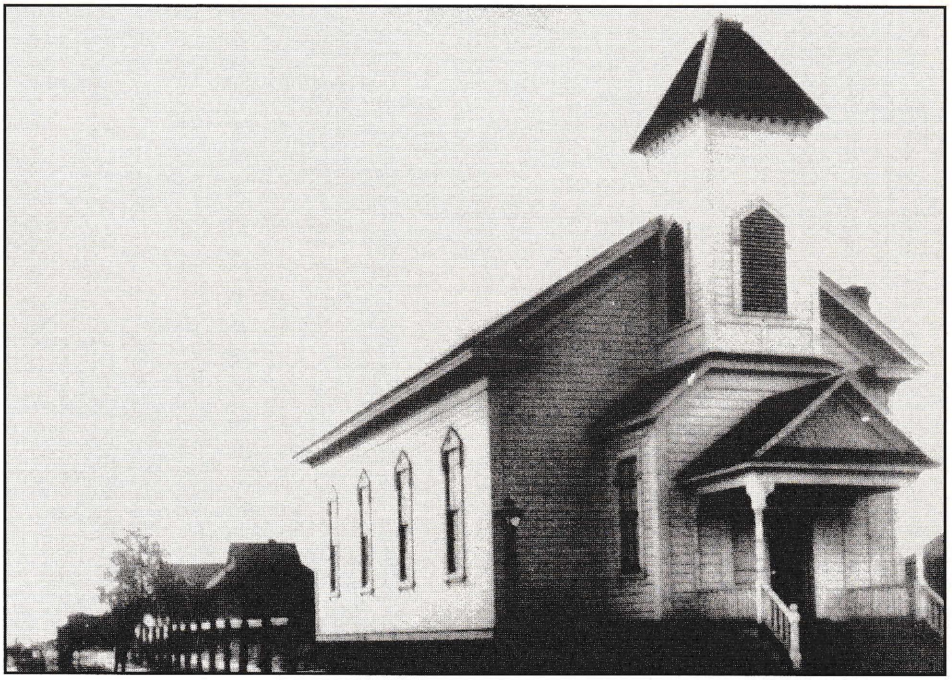


Photo courtesy of San Joaquin County Historical Museum

Acampo Church. ▲



▲ *Acampo Road, circa 1910.*
Inset: Acampo Road, February 1923.

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Acampo, circa 1921; Mrs. Conmarl, Edith Diehl, Mrs. Stell, Euing, Glanville, Mrs. McCraken, Maud Morris and Mrs. Harmes. ▲



Acampo, 1920; Shed workers: top row: Ray Salon, Mr. Shipman. Bottom row: Mrs. Bryant and Marie Sperling, second from right. ▲
Photo courtesy of Kirst Family